



E-Newsletter www.house.gov/simpson June 11, 2003

What's Up this Week

For the week of June 9 to June 13, 2003

Wednesday

Simpson will testify on his bill H.R. 2285, "Servicemembers Overseas Outreach Act" in the House Veterans Affairs Committee from 10:30 to 11 a.m. EDT in 334 Cannon. The bill mandates that the Department of Labor place staff in overseas veterans' assistance offices that are on military installations.

The Resources Committee is scheduled to vote on Simpson's bill to boost salmon funding in the northwest. The bill, "The Pacific Salmon Recovery Act," would authorize \$250 million a year for three years for the restoration of salmon and steelhead habitat in California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska and Idaho.

Simpson will attend Spanish class from 7 to 9 a.m. EDT in the U.S. Capitol. Simpson is one of 12 House members learning Spanish for 12 weeks.

Thursday

The House is scheduled to vote on H.R. 1115, the "Class Action Fairness Act." The bill establishes a consumer class action bill of rights, bars the approval of net-loss settlements and gives greater scrutiny of coupon settlements.



Congressman Mike Simpson visits with AMI Public Affairs and Communications Director Arlen Whittrock. Simpson was on hand during the recent ribbon cutting for AMI Semiconductors' Engineering and Research Center in Pocatello. Simpson spoke to the more than 300 people in attendance.

Washington, DC,
1339 Longworth
Washington, D.C.
20515
Phone: 202-225-5531
Fax: 202-225-8216

Boise Office
802 West Bannock,
Suite 600
Boise, ID 83702
Phone: 208-334-1953
Fax: 208-334-9533

Idaho Falls Office
490 Memorial Drive,
Suite 103
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
Phone: 208-523-6701
Fax: 208-523-2384

Twin Falls Office
1201 Falls Ave. E.
Suite 25
Twin Falls, ID 83301
Phone: 208-734-7219
Fax: 208-734-7244

Pocatello Office
801 E. Sherman, Suite
194
Pocatello, ID 83201
Phone: 208-478-4160
Fax: 208-478-4162

Weekly Website

Learn more about America's Founding Fathers at:

<http://www.foundingfathers.info>

Federal Facts

36 percent of American children live away from their biological fathers.

Idaho History Quiz

Congratulations to Pete Black of Pocatello who successfully answered last week's trivia question. Albertson College of Idaho is the oldest four-year college in Idaho.

What is the largest man-made geyser in Idaho?

Answer this question correctly and you'll be featured in next week's e-newsletter!

Quote of the Week

*"A father is a banker provided by nature."
— French Proverb*

"I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection." --Sigmund Freud

Flag Protection Amendment Passes House

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution today calling for the legal protection for the most revered and universally recognized symbol of the United States – the American flag. Idaho Congressmen Mike Simpson and C.L. "Butch" Otter, both co-sponsors of the resolution, helped pass H.J. Res. 4 on a vote of 300 to 125.

The resolution seeks to give Congress the constitutional authority to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag.

The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that Congress currently lacks that power, and that laws against flag desecration violate the First Amendment guarantee of free speech. The only way to protect the flag is through a constitutional amendment. An amendment, if approved by a two-thirds vote in the Senate and then by at least 38 state legislatures within the next seven years, would allow Congress the power to prohibit flag desecration through law.

"For more than 200 years the Stars and Stripes have served as a worldwide symbol of liberty. The flag has guided soldiers on war-torn battlefields and has been draped over patriots' coffins who have given their lives for freedom. As a symbol of our country, I believe it deserves and demands protection from those who would try to desecrate it. I am proud to have joined the House of Representatives to begin the process of protecting this sacred symbol," Simpson said.

The power of the States and the Federal government to prohibit the physical desecration of the American flag was limited in 1989 by a 5-4 decision of the United States Supreme Court in *Texas v. Johnson*, 491 U.S. 397 (1989). The case held that the First Amendment protected the burning of an American flag as part of a political demonstration. Congress responded by passing a statute to outlaw such conduct while addressing the Supreme Court's concerns. However, the Supreme Court invalidated that law in 1990 in another 5-4 decision in *United States v. Eichman*, 496 U.S. 310 (1990). A constitutional amendment became the only alternative remedy open to Congress.

Simpson Calls Bechtel Lay-offs “Frustrating”

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson issued the following statement in reaction to Bechtel’s decision to inform its workforce of layoffs planned for this summer.

“I am very dismayed by Bechtel’s announcement today of impending layoffs at the INEEL. In recent days, I have asked Bechtel and the DOE to explore other alternatives, including an early retirement or voluntary incentives package prior to an involuntary separation. I have been told that is not a realistic option and that they are moving forward with an involuntary separation of site workers. This is both frustrating and troublesome,” said Simpson.

“I remain committed to working with the site’s workforce to ensure those who are affected by Bechtel’s plans are provided the best benefits possible and are given adequate justification by Bechtel and the DOE for the loss of their job. In addition, I am committed to putting any further attempted layoffs by Bechtel under a microscope to ensure the best long-term interests of the site and its workforce are protected,” said Simpson.

Simpson Authors Legislation to Change Funding Formula for Centers for Independent Living

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson has introduced bi-partisan legislation creating a new funding formula for Centers for Independent Living (CIL's).

Centers for Independent Living are non-profit, non-residential corporations that are administered, staffed and managed by people with disabilities. The centers offer Americans with disabilities the opportunity to gain work skills, employment opportunities, help in finding housing and personal assistance. Many of the centers focus on getting people with disabilities out of nursing homes and living on their own. This effort saves taxpayers money, because it costs twice as much per year to house a person in a nursing home than the cost of community based assistance programs. Last year CIL’s kept 19,000 people out of nursing homes, saving taxpayers \$410 million.

“Centers for Independent Living do tremendous work in improving the lives of Americans with disabilities. Studies show that 70 percent of people with disabilities want to work but only one percent of those receiving federal benefits enter the work force. Person by person, CIL’s are changing society by offering job skills and helping people with disabilities become truly ‘independent.’” Simpson said.

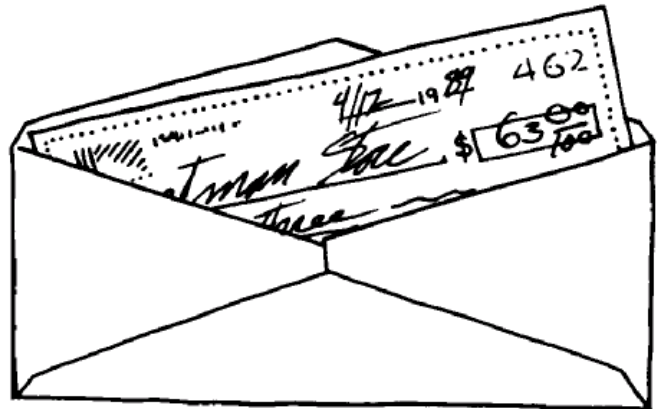
Current federal funding formulas leave less populated states like Idaho with little or no increases for CIL’s. Until last year, Idaho had not received an increase in federal funding for independent living centers in 13 years. Simpson’s bill, H.R. 2385, brings greater equity in Title VII Part C funding for the development and expansion of Centers for Independent Living (CIL's) across America. According to Simpson’s bill, 50 percent of all new funds would be divided equally among the states and territories. The remaining 50 percent would be distributed according to population.

The Check is in the Mail...

Legislation Gives Parents Child Tax Credit Refund

If you have children, you may be eligible to receive a tax credit check thanks to the Jobs and Growth Tax Act of 2003. The legislation increased the child tax credit retroactively for 2002 to \$1000 per child from \$600.

The process for issuing checks for the advance payment of the child tax credit takes 6 to 8 weeks. The IRS begins by running a program to search more than 130 million 2002 tax returns filed earlier this year to identify taxpayers eligible for the advance payment. A calculation is performed for those eligible for the credit to determine the amount of the check and the data is transmitted to Financial Management Service (FMS), the agency in Treasury which issues all federal government checks - like Social Security, government employee and Military pay checks. A testing process is also performed to minimize errors.



Checks are scheduled to be issued beginning July 25, 2003 in the following manner:

<u>Last 2 Digits of SSN</u>	<u>Date Check Mailed</u>	<u>Estimated Volume</u>	<u>Estimated Dollars</u>
00-33	7/25/03	8.6 million	\$4.42 billion
34-66	8/1/03	8.4 million	\$4.29 billion
67-99	8/8/03	8.4 million	\$4.29 billion

The Senate has passed a bill that provides for approximately 7 million additional advance child tax credit checks to be issued. Many press reports have inaccurately reported a time frame for which these additional checks proposed by the Senate-passed legislation would be issued.

If the additional checks were to be included with those provided for by the Jobs and Growth Act, that would cause a delay of nearly one month for the 25 million taxpayers scheduled to receive checks beginning in late July. This is because IRS would be required to restart the identification and calculation process begun last month. Alternatively, the process for the additional round of checks can begin only after the first round of checks is issued.